

BALLET TODAY

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A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO BALLET EVERYWHERE

2/-

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PETER REVITT'S
BALLET GUYED

which will be ready early this autumn

36 caricatures of the leading English, French, Russian and American dance personalities of the day, drawn with impartial malice towards all, or none, (whichever way you like to look at it), by the wickedest pen of the day.

Jean Babilée, Alexandra Danilova, Margot Fonteyn, Frederic Franklin, Robert Helpmann, Renée Jeanmaire, Nora Kaye, Leonide Massine, Roland Petit and Moira Shearer are amongst the dancers thus immortalised, and there are over two dozen more.

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Anton Dolin as Albrecht in 'Giselle'

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

OUR Covent Garden visitors this year will just about have arrived by the time these words are read, for the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo starts its six weeks' season on June 21st. Last year's stars, Rosella Hightower, Marjorie Tallchief, Ethery Pagava, André Eglevsky and George Skibine are still with the company, and everyone will be anxious for the first glimpse in ten years of Tamara Toumanova who joined the company after its London season last year. Lichine and Riabouchinska are appearing as guest artists so that the company is now very strong in soloists. New (or new to London) ballets by Nijinska, Massine, and Lichine should greatly strengthen a repertoire which was last year considered somewhat tenuous. *Ballet Today's* Paris correspondent writes of the new Nijinska ballet which had its *première* there and it will be interesting to see whether London endorses Paris opinion. I am greatly indebted to Gérard Mulys (who will be remembered as one of the leading dancers with Lifar's Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo) for obtaining for me Gontcharova's design for the décor of Lichine's new ballet, *Un Coeur de Diamant*, and a sketch by her husband, Michel Larionov, of Skibine and Toumanova rehearsing this ballet at Monte Carlo. He also sent me Gontcharova's self-portrait which she drew for him and which I reproduce on page 30.

Sadler's Wells Ballet will be on holiday all through July but will return for a short season at Covent Garden in August. Their season at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, will open on October 9th with a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, with Fonteyn, Helpmann, and Ashton, while Moira Shearer will dance in the *Blue Bird pas de deux*. This piece of casting is obviously prompted by American eagerness to see the red-haired star of *The Red Shoes* which is a tremendous success in America. At the same time it is necessary to point out that in America, as elsewhere, the *Blue Bird* himself is still considered the more important figure in this particular *pas de deux*, and that audiences who are accustomed to see such dancers as Youskevitch, Eglevsky and Danielian in this part have had very high standards set for them which they will expect to see reached.

Recent slight alterations to *Le Lac des Cygnes* which remove some of the lengthy mime passages from the second act would also seem to have been inspired by the prospect of American reactions, since general opinion here for years has found itself up against an impervious directorate.

Mr. Sol Hurok is already busy with a formidable publicity campaign "selling" our Ballet to an audience to whom our repertoire and our dancers are entirely unknown quantities. Mr. Hurok headed one imposing advertisement "Ballet News of the Year" and goes on to announce a "breath-taking repertory of new lavish productions" for "the most brilliant October season New York will ever enjoy." The effect is a little spoiled by the incorrect spelling of one of the dancer's names, but this is only a fair exchange for the persistence with which Covent Garden added a final "k" to Franklin's Christian name during the recent season. The publicity will probably continue to "hot up" through the coming months so that Sadler's Wells will not be able to complain that they arrived unheralded. Certainly no visiting company to this country has ever had such an advance build up.

I regret that the Ballet Rambert season at the Mercury commencing May 30th, and the season at the Empress Hall this month with Danilova, Franklin, Massine, Kalioujny, and the Metropolitan Ballet, both began after this magazine had to go to press, but they will be fully noticed in the next issue.

Anatole Chujoy, editor of the *New York Dance News*, has recently sent me his *Dance Encyclopedia* and, frankly, I don't know how I have hitherto managed to live without it. The adjectives "monumental" and "indispensable" are inevitable and simply have to be used. Here, alphabetically listed, is almost everything one has ever wanted to know or is ever likely to want to know about Ballet, from the almost obsolete term "*abaisser*" to the biographical note on Hans Zullig. Many of the subjects are expanded into essays which, for convenience sake, are listed amongst the Contents. Of these essays I myself would give pride of place to that on "Criticism" by Edwin Denby. The whole book is shot through with unexpected flashes of humour and pieces of out-of-the-way information over and above what one might reasonably expect to find. The explanations of the technical terms which comprise the classical technique have never been more lucidly set down. There are one or two rather surprising omissions and some even more surprising inclusions where English Ballet is concerned and probably the same applies in America if one knew enough about it, but a few slips were bound to occur and the thoroughness of the whole undertaking is something to marvel at. The price in America is \$7.50 and I only hope that some copies will find their way here. I have only one complaint: that since *Dance Encyclopedia's* arrival I find it very difficult to get any work done. P.W.M.

SPRING SEASON AT COVENT GARDEN

By MARY CLARKE

IT was on November 24th, 1942, at the Opera House in San Francisco, that Alexandra Danilova danced the name part in *Giselle* for the first time and it was not until March 28th, 1949, that London saw her performance. Until 1942 Danilova had always been associated with Myrtha, the Queen of the Wilis, and I doubt if any of her greatest admirers had ever even mentally cast her as Giselle. Danilova was always the soubrette of the ballet; an artist of incomparable personality and gaiety, unique and irreplaceable in her creations. Her classical performances were, in a way, more artificial. She was not a "natural" Swan Queen as she was a "natural" Street Dancer but one applauded the artistry with which she subdued her natural brilliance to the muted sorrows of Odette.

Giselle is another such subjugation of the ballerina's own temperament. When she made her first entrance I, for one, could hardly believe my eyes. She was so young, so charmingly fresh and simple! Her first scene with Albrecht, her gentle thanks after he despatches Hilarion, her eager welcome of her vine-gathering friends—all this was indeed *Giselle*. But when she arrived at the first act solo Danilova seemed to lose the character in the dancing. She is, above all, a *sophisticated* dancer and this quality emerged so strongly in the solo that it made mockery of *Giselle's* humble birth.

Her mad scene was, for me, marred by excess of naturalism. She was most certainly mad, but of a horrifying madness more suited to *The Snake Pit* than of the touching quality demanded by Gautier's romanticised story. (It is interesting to note the increasing emphasis placed on this scene since its first performance in 1841. Contemporary notices of Grisi's performance hardly mention it and Serge Lifar has rightly said that if she were to return today "son interprétation nous décevrait sans doute, car l'image de la jeune paysanne, métamorphosée en Wili, telle que nous la concevons, diffère de l'original. Elle est, tout à la fois, plus dramatique et plus abstraite.")

In the second act Danilova became entirely wraithlike in appearance and some of her poses and lifts were exquisite but again I thought she slipped out of character when she began to dance. It was rather a display of pure dancing than an evocation of a spirit. But there were many fine moments and the final exit, when she melts

away into the trees as Albrecht kneels with bowed head at her grave, is an enormous improvement on the ungainly ending used in the Sadler's Wells production. As a contemporary performance Danilova's *Giselle* is by no means flawless, and yet there is so much there of value that I was grateful to see it.

Frederic Franklin was a most attractive Albrecht. His performance was pleasant, restrained and sympathetic and his dancing excellent. He has not the manner or the physique of the born *danseur noble* yet he gave nothing short of good performances in everything he danced in London. Franz in *Coppélia* was probably his best role and he did all that is possible with this anaemic creature. As the season progressed one was increasingly sorry that both dancers could not have been seen with their own company. Franklin's reputation in America does not

MARGOT FONTEYN IN "APPARITIONS"

Action photograph by Frank Sharman





Action photograph by Frank Sharman

ALEXANDRA DANILOVA AND FREDERIC FRANKLIN IN "GISELLE", ACT 2

est on cardboard princes and the fact that he is Alexandra Danilova's partner; his success there has rather been in character and demi-character roles and he is the valued *Maitre de Ballet* of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

Danilova too should have been seen in some of the ballets which have been created for her over the past ten years and which have been designed to utilise her personality and technique as it is today. No ballerina of any quality remains at one fixed point of development throughout her career and choreographers should exploit the enlargement of authority and the alterations of personality. Balanchine obviously created a different kind of dancing for Danilova in *Danses Concertantes* in 1944 from that he composed for her in 1928 in *Les Dieux Mendians*. Similarly the great Cecchetti inspired the Blue Bird and later a succession of widely varied roles such as Köstchei, Pantalón, the Charlatan, the Astrologer and the Marquis di Luca.

I am inclining increasingly to the belief that whereas re-creation of a role (and even of a ballet) may succeed, resurrection hardly ever does. And yet the Can-Can that Danilova danced on her last night at Covent Garden on April 9th is unlikely to be forgotten by anyone who saw it. On that occasion, as on March 21st when

Massine danced the Miller again, time not only stood still—it rolled back.

Time was a big factor too at the revival of *Apparitions* on March 24th. I think everyone in the audience must have been struck by the way the Sadler's Wells company had "grown up" since the ballet was first presented at Sadler's Wells Theatre in February, 1936. Then it was a tremendous achievement for the young company, and when *Symphonie Fantastique* came along in the July of that year Ashton could congratulate himself on having created the more effective ballroom scene. Now, translated to the same stage that housed the first performances of *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Apparitions* faces a more detailed comparison and comes off less well.

As essays in choreography the two ballets are entirely dissimilar but the comparison is made inevitable by the similarity of the stories. I would say that Ashton is the more successful in the mimed prologue and epilogue and in the ballroom scene but that Massine wins hands down with his pastoral scene and the march to the scaffold.

Ashton was, of course, limited by the 1936 resources of the Vic-Wells company when he made the ballet and, in the context in which he created it, it was a very important achievement. Now it is an example of "early

Ashton" and, as a record of a maturing talent, reveals many foretastes of the genius that was to create the formal ensembles of *Cinderella* and the orchestration of movement that is *Scènes de Ballet*.

The ballroom scene of *Apparitions* is, by any standards, a wonderful piece of imaginative choreography. The enormous stage, with its only décor the cyclorama which seems to extend into infinity, heightens the dream quality by removing all tangible walls and surroundings and concentrating the attention on the characters themselves. It is a pity that much of the actual dancing is now obscured by the voluminous dresses. (The way to put a small ballet on a large stage is surely to add a few more dancers in scenes of this description and not to clap on a few more yards of tulle to the costumes.) The dancers have also shown a tendency to crowd to the front of the stage instead of taking advantage of their extra space.

The scene with the bells is marred by one of the most embarrassingly banal décors that have disgraced Covent Garden and here again many more dancers are needed. The costumes have been redesigned with some improvement but I still cannot see why the spirits of bells have to look like badgers. In this scene too the weaknesses of the Poet's role are apparent. It is neither purely mimed (as is the Poet in *Symphonie Fantastique*) nor really danced, but an odd compromise between the two. It would be more convincing balletically if the tantalising bells either drove the poet into a brilliant and terrifying dance or else buffeted against a helpless human figure.

The funeral procession looks superb as it winds its way across the vast stage but its only incident is, of course, purely mimed.

The orgy episode is choreographically the weakest. Even its original visual onslaught of fiery red colour is now minimised by shortening the girls' robes to a cross between an opera cloak and a bed jacket. There was opportunity here for creating a sense of stifling claustrophobia and concentrated evil but it is hardly achieved.

The alterations in staging chiefly affect the apparitions themselves. The first sight of the woman in a ball dress, beckoning so seductively from the mists of imagination, is extraordinarily beautiful and effective but her appearance in the epilogue is less satisfactory: I should prefer her to remain on the supernatural plane and not to descend to the study.

Fonteyn, Helpmann and Turner all appeared in their original roles and played them almost exactly as they did before except that they have all, in the meantime, become more experienced, more mature dancers. Perhaps Beaton had this in mind when he altered the women's ballroom costumes to a later period and put Fonteyn, now woman not girl, into a black dress she could never have dominated in 1936. But the men's costumes are practically unchanged and Helpmann now

looks much as Shelley might have looked had he lived until 1840 and been unable to afford a new coat.

The most enduring element of the ballet is the music. Lambert's selections from Liszt are ideally suited to the subject and run the gamut of emotions from the melancholy Consolation that is the theme of both prologue and epilogue to the fervid gaiety of the ballroom *galop*. The ovation that Lambert received when he conducted the first performances was an emphatic assertion by the audience (which is getting remarkably articulate these days) of how it had missed him, how it valued what he has meant to Sadler's Wells and, perhaps, what it had thought of the orchestra during the rest of the spring season.

The action photograph by Frank Sharman on the cover is of Robert Helpmann in "Apparitions" at Covent Garden.



PETER REVITT'S BALLET GUYED (NO. 8)
JOHN FIELD IN THE MAZURKA, "LE LAC DES CYGNES"

VERA MOSOLOVA, THE PASSING OF A GREAT BALLERINA

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

WITH the death of Vera Ilinichna Mosolova, who passed away in her sleep on January 29th at the age of seventy-three, Soviet Ballet lost a *coryphaeus* of the classical ballet of the old tradition and a celebrated teacher.

Vera Mosolova entered the ballet school of the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre in 1886, on the approval of the famous ballet master of the time, A. N. Bogdanov. Having joined the school in September, by December she was already appearing on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre, not only in various ballets where the participation of children was required either by the libretto or the whim of the choreographer, but also in operas, for pupils of the Imperial Theatre schools were expected to work hard and there were no such luxuries as supers in those days. Since then, one might say that she danced uninterruptedly for sixty-three years until her death. The day before, she tired her heart out by dancing Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody* for her pupils, preparing them for an examination which was to take place on the thirty-first of January. On the twenty-ninth she was to have the final rehearsal; but her pupils waited in vain for their beloved teacher. She did not come, though in all her life she had never missed a rehearsal except just once—a story she liked to repeat. In 1902, when she was already an experienced first soloist of the Maryinsky Theatre company, she was due for a rehearsal of *The Jump Backed Horse*, supervised by Petipa. Her watch had stopped, and although she thought she had left some time, when she arrived at the theatre the "frescoes" dance in the first act was already over. Her colleagues were terrified and advised her not to show herself to Petipa, the dreaded maestro who, at the slightest provocation shouted "Cobblers! Hot ices! No trace, no elevation! Off the stage!" in queer, broken Russian. Petipa was seated in the middle of the stage near the footlights. She boldly went up to him and said, "Pardon me, Marius Ivanovitch, my watch stopped, this is why I was not on time." He turned a benevolent face to her and said, "*Mais*, you know . . ." "Yes, I do, Marius Ivanovitch, I know my part well." "*Mais*, it does not matter, you may go home." The entire cast opened their mouths and could not understand what had happened to Petipa. But he knew that she was as fanatically devoted to the art as he was himself and that it could have been nothing but an accident.

Mosolova was transferred to Petersburg in 1896, three years after she had brilliantly graduated from the Moscow school. Director Vsevolozhsky came specially to her graduation examination. She was very light and ethereal. During her school years she was able to see Virginia Zucchi and Antoinette Dell'Era and it was the latter, a beautifully built dancer with a tremendous elevation, who became her ideal. She was told afterwards that she was the same type of dancer. In her last two years at school, even though the principal teacher, Mendes, was of no particular repute, she was given first soloist parts—the friend in *La Fille du Pharaoh*, Hélène in the *Faust* ballet, also second soloist parts such as one of Swanilda's friends in *Coppélia*.

In 1893, when she started her independent career as a dancer, the ballerinas were such as Carlotta Brianza and Lidia Geiten, a temperamental dancer and a mime of no less ability than Zucchi. But the Spaniard, Mendes, who replaced the talented ballet master Bogdanov, was absolutely helpless as a choreographer and left an impact which it took some time to erase. Mendes was replaced fairly soon by Ivan Khliustin, *premier danseur* and fairly good choreographer, more at home with miniatures. Vassily Tikhomirov, one of the best Russian dancers of the later period was just beginning his career, while Vassily Geltzer, the great mime, was in his prime.

Vera Mosolova worked hard, was very popular with all the company, was always full of mirth and adored dancing—it was very easy for her; she soared above the stage doing men's *pas* and jumps, something that has become quite usual in present-day Soviet ballet but an unheard of thing in those days. She had an extraordinary natural spring and most advantageous proportions of the body. Her knees were very strong, the ligaments of the ankles fine and resilient while her back had well-developed, almost masculine muscles which enabled her to glide in the air. Without any effort she did a double *cabriole en avant* and *entrechat six and sept*.

When the Bolshoi Theatre was preparing a special ballet, *Daiti*, for the Coronation of 1896 she danced with the famous Moscow dancer, Domashov, who was capable of literally stopping in the air, just as Nijinsky did years later. Domashov was fairly small. He never left Moscow—some say because he was a born Muscovite and could not bear the idea of leaving his birthplace, but

it is more likely that he was never given the chance. This is why he did not become as widely known as he deserved. Nicolas Legat wrote of him as a most gifted dancer in his "Story of the Russian School." According to Legat Nijinsky's work was child's play compared with that of Domashov.

The Petersburg ballet company arrived in full for the coronation. It was then that Moscow saw Petipa-Ivanov's *Swan Lake* for the first time. It greatly impressed those who remembered Reisinger's production of 1877. Vera Mosolova was charmed by Tchaikovsky's music and by Pierina Legnani, "who was music herself." Legnani was a revelation. She had steel *pointes* and extraordinary *aplomb*, the secret of which she later passed on to Mosolova who listened carefully to the advice of the great dancer and in due time learnt how to make a dead stop on one *pointe* after the most bravura movement, taking any pose. But Legnani also danced the part of Odette with infinite grace and feeling. Work in the Petersburg ballet had also taught her a great deal and she was no longer a mere Italian virtuoso. The Russian dancers taught her, perhaps unnoticed by herself, the Russian tradition of "soul inspired flight."

In the same year of 1896, Mosolova was selected, together with Ekaterina Geltzer, for transfer to Petersburg to work under the famous Christian Johannsen (himself a pupil of the Bournonvilles, who in turn were pupils of Vestris, the "god of dance"), a great Russian teacher of Danish origin, and Marius Petipa. She found a brilliant company, but it lacked young soloists at that time, and this explained the transfer. Both she and Geltzer used every opportunity afforded to them for tuition. In the morning at ten sharp Mosolova was in Johannsen's class for second soloists no matter how later she had been to bed the night before after a ball of which she was very fond. From eleven to twelve she took another class of Johannsen's for first soloists. After that she trained for another half-hour with partners. They were either Kiaksht or Sergei Legat, or the youthful Michael Obukhov and Michael Fokine, both of whom graduated from the school only a year later.

Johannsen used to tell his pupils of how he danced with Taglioni when she came to Petersburg. He would tell that she was far from young at the time of her tour to Russia, probably the wrong side of forty, but that she was light as a dream on the stage. She never performed anything in the nature of a *tour de force*, but when she appeared in a ballet the theatre became still and then the audience roared, admiring the sculpture of her graceful movements and poses.

Johannsen was very displeased with the Mendes legacy Mosolova and Geltzer brought to his class—particularly the stiff, unexpressive arms. He taught them to dance so that at any moment, should they be

suddenly stopped, their poses might be sculptured. It was a period when the Russian school was finally moulding itself. Three elements were merged in it: grace, technical strength and expressive emotion. One could not exist without the other.

In 1898 Mosolova went for the first time on a tour abroad to dance in Budapest. Nicolas Legat, who was amongst the group together with his brother, Sergei, choreographed some numbers for her and Obukhov—*pas de deux* from *Venetian Carnival* and a new creation, *Valse Cibulki*. The latter was Mosolova's debut in a difficult *pas* as first soloist. This number, mentioned by Legat in his book, had a tremendous success, winning over all of Budapest. She also danced a *pas de trois*—*Pas de Diane*—with herself as Diana, Fokine as the Satyr and Obukhov as Endymion.

When she returned from her first tour she went directly to Johannsen's apartment to thank him for what she owed to him and to take him some flowers. The old man was deeply touched—it seemed it was the first time in his life anyone had done such a thing.

In 1899 she had a Vienna debut with great success. She was invited to stay for the winter season but it was out of the question though in those days an invitation to the Vienna Opera could not be matched by any other one. Throughout her life Mosolova remained patriotic and devoted to her own country.

In 1905 Mosolova considerably spoiled her relations with the management of the Imperial Theatres by being one of the leaders in the actors' movement for better conditions for the *corps de ballet* and other lesser categories of actors, and for certain minimum rights which all actors were deprived. This was not forgotten and until 1917 Mosolova was not awarded the long deserved title of full ballerina although for ten years she had danced only ballerina parts.

In 1908 Mosolova officially started teaching at the Bolshoi Theatre school, though actually she began two or three years earlier, because Vassily Tikhomirov, to whom all the male dancers of that period, Mordkin, Volinin, Swoboda, Novikov, owe their training and artistry, always entrusted his class to her whenever he had to go away.

In 1911 she was invited by Diaghilev, who was combing Moscow for talent, to go to Paris but she did not agree because of the conditions. However, the same year she went to London in September to dance for one month at the Alhambra in a seven-scene ballet *Dance Dream* choreographed for the purpose by Alexander Gorsky. The ballet ran for five months and was danced in turn by Geltzer, Balashova and Mosolova. News papers compared her to Pavlova who was already known in London, but she modestly said that they merely had the same manner, both having been pupils of the great Johannsen.

She became great friends with Pavlova and in March

1913, was invited by her both to dance and teach in her company. She had to face one hundred and thirty performances in the course of four months, eight performances a week. As they had two matinées weekly, she gave lessons to the company four times a week. Then there were many rehearsals. In addition to Mosolova, two Moscow dancers, Maria Gorshkova and Maria Nevelskaya came to London at the invitation of Pavlova and had to learn the repertoire. Then there was a group of dancers from Warsaw, also new to the company, for Pavlova was already giving up the idea of having an all-Russian cast. Pavlova herself taught a group of small English children in her studio. When Pavlova was tired or busy with administrative affairs Mosolova, who lived with Pavlova at Ivy House, taught the children. Over and above all this she had two private pupils to teach—Lydia Kysht, who was dancing at the Empire at the time, and the English dancer, Hilda Bewicke, Pavlova's former soloist, who was then dancing at the Alhambra. Bewicke entered Diaghilev's company and her name may be found in the programme of Diaghilev's 1921 *Sleeping Princess*.

ERA MOSOLOVA AS AURORA IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY", 1915



In spite of all this work Mosolova was, as usual, happiest in her own element. This is what she wrote about their Palace Theatre season in her memoirs:—“Our ballets were done either by Fokine or Petipa. The Fokine numbers were *Invitation to the Dance*, Liszt's *Les Préludes*, with the theme of ‘The struggle of good and evil, light and darkness,’ an original ballet in Greek tunics and specially designed soft rubber stockings which replaced the ballet shoe. We also had extracts from *Coppélia* and many *divertissements* of Fokine's composition. I had to take part in the general dances of the first two ballets: in *Coppélia* I danced the title part, while in the *divertissements* I did a *pas de deux* with Romanovsky to Godard's waltz, another *pas de deux* with Koblelev called *The Rose and the Butterfly* and a Russian solo dance. All of my dances were received with great success.

“Anna Pavlova herself, a dancer of genius and the greatest actress of our period, was light as a feather and possessed infinite charm. She excelled in mime—her *Dying Swan* made us weep, *Papillon* charmed by its lightness, speed and ethereal lack of weight, while the *Bacchanale* was intoxicating. Our tickets were sold out a month and a half in advance. One would think that the prim and reserved English people could not applaud, shout and whistle in such an unrestrained manner. We did not know at first that whistling was the utmost expression of admiration. Anna was literally carried in arms by the audience, and it was impossible to act otherwise, she was so touchingly beautiful. Her partner, the Moscow dancer Laurent Novikov, was very much admired by the British.

“On Sundays all the theatres were closed. But Anna made use of the free day, and beginning with the morning people came to sculpture, paint and photograph her, and so it lasted until dinner, after which we listened to music for future ballets. I stayed with Anna at Ivy House—she said I had a very soothing effect on her nerves—and on Sundays suffered both for her and for myself.

“Thus I worked for Pavlova for four months. The last two weeks we had nine performances, three matinées instead of the former two.

“Our farewell performance was a real triumph. The stage became a veritable garden. The reception was most unusual for London. After the completion of our programme there should have been twenty-five minutes of ‘Bioscope’—the cinema was then a music-hall attraction. But the audience spent the time applauding and thanking the Russian Ballet. The managers were unable to do anything. All stood up like one and cheered, while we stood on the stage and cried—it was too much for our nerves.

“After the completion of the season Pavlova and Dandré begged me to go with them on tour to North and South America for a whole six months—from October to April, 1914. But I would not think of abandoning my



From the Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection

A SCENE FROM "DANCE DREAM" THE BALLET IN WHICH VERA MOSOLOVA APPEARED AT THE ALHAMBRA IN 1911

dear Moscow for such a long period. I was in a hurry to get home and open my own school. Anna was slightly hurt—she wanted me to be with her. I adored her as a rare phenomenon in our art, but I loved my country more and had to decline. We parted with her as good friends, however."

In her two visits to London Mosolova never mastered the English language and was surprised that when one said "Stage door, Palace," without the proper accent taxi drivers could not understand her, so she developed a special lisp. But she got to know and love London, roamed in its parks, spent much time at the British Museum and particularly admired the shops where one could buy pets. "I wanted to buy them all—the white and the black and the Persian kitten." This love for animals and particularly for cats remained with her all her days.

Upon returning to Moscow she opened her school and continued dancing at the Bolshoi Theatre. On October 4th, 1915, she had a tremendous success in *The Sleeping Beauty* with Swoboda (died August 23rd, 1948), playing his first leading part in a whole ballet.

Mosolova was not exactly a debutante since she had already danced the part of Aurora, but the performance was in the nature of a debut. This is what a contemporary notice (in the theatrical magazine *Footlights and Life*) said:—"Mosolova is a striking representative of the old classical ballet. She is almost the only dancer who preserves its traditions in our ballet. Madame Mosolova is therefore most interesting as a ballerina. Her technique is astoundingly precise, her gestures and poses lack that negligence which is peculiar to the new type of ballerinas, those who frown upon technique and the hard work connected with it. Each movement of Madame Mosolova is done after a strictly calculated 'method', therefore the spectator may be always sure that Mosolova will 'turn to the end' in the *double tour*, that she will perform the specified number of *chainés*, etc. which is far from certain with the ballerinas of the 'new school'." (This was a kick at the school of Gorsky.) "The part of Aurora was excellently performed by the ballerina. The first act, most difficult because of the interpolated variations, was carried through beyond any praise. Madame Mosolova also possesses more than

enough of the assuredness which is a necessary trait of every ballerina. During a variation in the 'Nymphs' scene she was able calmly to complete it in spite of the fact that one of her shoes became untied and she was likely to lose it or fall herself. Madame Mosolova also acted most naturally."

In 1918 Mosolova left her career as a dancer after twenty-five years at the Bolshoi and the Maryinsky. She devoted herself exclusively to teaching and has educated several generations of Soviet dancers. Igor Moiseyev, Asaf and Shulamith Messerer, Vera Vassilieva and many, many dancers of the Bolshoi Theatre remember her warmly as a teacher. The last years she devoted to teaching dance to dramatic and opera actors. In 1943 the grand Golden Jubilee was arranged for her by the Opera theatre named after Stanislavsky and at that time she was awarded the title of Honoured Art Worker of the R.S.F.S.R.

She also taught at the dramatic studio for young actors. Her job was not an easy one. She had to take a group of adults who had never studied dancing and teach them to move gracefully and to dance at least some dances. She would sometimes say crossly:—"I can't make anything decent out of a crochet hook." But if the "hook" was really anxious to try, she could make even a hook dance passably.

Only one thing she would not tolerate: laziness and lack of devotion to the art she loved with every fibre of her body. Once an actress coughed at her dancing lesson. Madame was furious. The actress pleaded a cold and said she could not help coughing. Madame looked very much surprised and said in all earnestness: "Strange. The great actors I knew never coughed in the theatre. They coughed at home and then only when nobody heard them."

In spite of her exacting and sometimes trying habits as a teacher she was adored by everyone who came in contact with her. For her, each day, each hour, spent at work in the theatre, any theatre, was a Sunday. But

when she came to see a performance in the evening, walking erect with her back as straight as it was when she left school, her proud grey head adorned the entire theatre and the actors were happy to see her in the first row, eagerly discussing the play. She was a burning patriot, never left Moscow all through the war and was always the same cheerful, disciplined self. After the war she flew for the first time in her life to a Crimean resort and liked it so much that she flew both ways every year until last summer. Every morning she did exercises and just would not hear of fatigue.

When her body lay in state at the All Russian Theatrical Society, all her friends and pupils both young and old came to pay her the last tribute. She left only one sister who lived in Leningrad at the Home for Veteran Actors and was too aged to come. But one might have said upon entering the hall—"What a large family this woman had"—so genuine was the emotion and so deep was the grief for the ever young woman with the great and generous heart.

Ekaterina Geltzer, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R., her friend for sixty-three years, took the place of the nearest of kin. She pledged that the examination which Mosolova had taken through to the last rehearsal would take place. And a week later, with Mosolova's portrait in oils, holding her favourite cat, adorning the grand piano, Geltzer took the examination at the studio where her friend had taught. The young students danced the whole of the Liszt Rhapsody and the mazurka from *Ivan Susanin*.

After the examination, when the large audience applauded the pupils and Geltzer, she motioned for silence and, addressing the portrait of Mosolova, said, "My dear friend, I hope I have done everything today to your desire."

Had I personally the chance to choose an epitaph for Mosolova, I would use a quotation from Shakespeare, (John of Gaunt's dying words), "Love they to live, that love and honour have."

A GLIMPSE OF ULANOVA

ONE of the most interesting of recent theatrical events in an extensive section of Central Europe has been the appearance of Galina Ulanova and Mikhail Gabovitch in several principal cities. They represented Ballet in a group composed otherwise of opera singers, a pianist and a 'cellist. This group gave a very attractive programme under the heading of "An Evening of Russian Artists".

Balletomanes were prominent among the crowds who flocked to the box office from the moment the event was

announced. In one town, unfortunates who had arrived at a ticket agency after closing-time were groping through cellars and falling over dustbins in a hopeful attempt to find a back-entrance through which they might prevail on some belated and soft-hearted clerk to supply them with any ticket for anywhere in the theatre "to see Ulanova!"

An outside and detached impression of the performance in one town may be of interest to English readers.

Included in the repertoire were a Chopin Mazurka



GALINA ULANOVA AND
MIKHAIL GABOVITCH
IN THE CHOPIN
MAZURKA

(*pas de deux*), *La Mort du Cygne* and a Rubenstein waltz (*pas de deux*). The first was strictly classical: she in long palest pink tutu, he in the accepted costume. It was, perhaps, not the "Chopin" to which London Sylphide-lovers are most accustomed as it had more of the quality of a wild rose, daylit, than of wistfulness, moonlit, but Ulanova's grace and Gabovitch's careful partnering made it a charming number.

La Mort du Cygne brought the packed house right down, both on announcement and at the finish. Many in the audience were probably seeing this for the first time as performed by a world-famous dancer.

Gabovitch's solo was chiefly confined to a most effective whirling of coloured paper whips. In both the *pas de deux* he gave the impression of a most conscientious and adequate partner.

The Rubenstein waltz was the *pièce de résistance*. As an older generation of balletomanes sees things, one was left feeling that one should first "tune-in to a new wavelength" and then (and only then) watch it all over again in order to be able to give any coherent impression of it at all! *Theme*. Youth chases nymph. *Costumes*. He in white shirt and "flannels". She in pale-green tunic, with bouquet—reminiscent of the *Bacchanale* of Pavlova. The speed was stratospheric! The choreographic ingredients introduced such a daring degree of "acrobatic-into-classic" that any sensations left over during several minutes' hypnosis by sheer vitality and speed were divided between admiration for accomplishment and breath-taking thrills as to "whether he'd catch her". As Ballet it was deeply interesting to anyone who has never seen ingredients mixed in such high tension proportions before.

The whole thing could be called "a romp" but such a word is elegant, exhilarating, 400 m.p.h. "romp" that this delighted audience went home feeling ten years younger, which is, after all, the chief aim of first-class entertainment—and first-class entertainment it certainly was!

I had the good fortune to get a glimpse of Madame Ulanova privately. She is a very charming, serious-faced little person with a cloud of blonde hair and an occasional quiet, most attractive smile. She had on an extremely simple, well-cut, strawberry coloured frock and was looking very young and *distracte* over the fact that she could only find one inadequate vase for the ever-increasing masses of flowers heaped round her. On a table in her room was the inevitable pink satin shoe with the inevitable darning needle stuck through the toe.

She is courtesy itself even to the most pushing of fans, and many a local performer, as well as balletomanes, was left after her visit with a treasured autograph and a picture to be added to some already treasured collection, a delightful memory of a charming dancer, and a new angle on certain developments in modern Ballet which, however eyes of past generations may view them, are based on an abundant vitality and freshness which are worth studying for themselves alone.

G.M.

I know all readers will join with me in wishing a speedy recovery to Elena Roslavleva, *Ballet Today's* Moscow correspondent, who was knocked down and seriously injured by a lorry which mounted the pavement when swerving to avoid a child.



THE CHILDREN AT PLAY IN THE FIRST ACT OF "HAPPY SHORES"

TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE NEW SOVIET BALLET REVIEWED IN THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

VIOLETTA BOVT, THE AMERICAN-BORN SOVIET BALLERINA, IN "HAPPY SHORES"



LES BALLETS DE PARIS AGAIN

THE only new ballet presented during the second short London season of the Ballets de Paris de Roland Petit at the Princes Theatre was *Le Rêve de Léonor* (first night, April 26th). This is the ballet for which Roland Petit originally arranged the choreography but which, after a disagreement with librettist-designer Léonor Fini, appeared, *sans decor*, as a *Grand Pas d'Action* to the Liebestod from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Frederick Ashton inherited the story and decor but for music chose Benjamin Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* (which, incidentally, cuts the originally intended length of the ballet to less than one half, which does seem to show that Shakespeare was right about there being good in everything). Anything more incongruous than the "story" of the ballet and this particular music can hardly be imagined and between the two Frederick Ashton seems for once to be at a loss.

The result turns out to be what a friend of mine called "another Ballets de Paris floor show" for, as in *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* and, particularly, *Carmen*, there is a great deal of suggestive rolling on the floor lightly disguised as *pas de deux*. The audience did not seem quite to know whether the hank of hair floating across the stage pursued by the bald heroine was intended to be funny, and was similarly at a loss when what looked like Marat's bath, with a female head protruding, was pushed in and the female let out some loud cacklings. However it took the floor rollings with becoming seriousness, and as Ashton was the choreographer it would have been almost impossible to have entirely excluded beauty from some of the movements.

Renée Jeanmaire as the protagonist in all this nonsense danced with her accustomed lithe spiritedness and performed the miracle of looking attractive even when bald. Of the rest of the cast only Milorad Miscovitch and John Gilpin emerged from the hurly burly, the former nobly sharing with Jeanmaire the very literally *terre à terre* portions of the choreography, while the latter, handicapped by a top-heavy wig and jacket, coped successfully with a solo too tightly packed with technical difficulties to be really effective.

Vyroubova, Skouratoff and Rodolphe have left the company but John Gilpin is a considerable acquisition. He has developed both physically and technically since we saw him last and has what is so rare in an English male dancer, an obvious joy in dancing. He is half-a-dozen years too young for the Dandy in *Le Beau Danube*, a fault which only Time can remedy, but he dances it with great technical proficiency and élan. His military service is still before him but it should not now do him irreparable harm and there is every reason to believe

that he will make a big name in Ballet in a few years.

The audiences for Les Ballets de Paris have plainly decided that this company can do no wrong and applaud near-hysterically everything except the classical excerpts which they may feel are poaching on other ballet preserves. *Carmen* remains the chief occasion for yelling the roof off, and it is perhaps unkind to suggest that what they take for exciting choreography is excitement of another and more questionable sort. For myself I find it depressing that audiences should so obviously be deceived by the conviction with which it is performed.



Photograph by Paul Wilson
RENÉE JEANMAIRE IN "LE RÊVE DE LÉONOR"

to believing that Petit's embarrassingly poor solo is actually a good one, though I commend him for replacing those black silk tights with woollen ones. I remain unshaken in my belief that Petit is one of the White Hopes of Ballet, but no one can be director, chief choreographer and leading dancer of a company and do himself full justice in each capacity. It is Petit, the choreographer, whom I hope finally to see emerge: the ballet world has need of him if he will only give himself the chance.

P.W.M.



Photograph by Deste

KURT JOOSS

CHILE ADVENTURE

KURT JOOSS went to Chile last year—on, as it were, a voyage of discovery.

After the spotlight of being the only Britisher with a transit visa and therefore a lonely internee at Buenos Aires (by a new ruling of only the night before) he was detained on his Blue Star ship while it loaded our meat ration at the adjacent depot of Frigorifico and eventually escorted by two gentle-fierce and elegant *soldados* to his train. After a twelve-hour journey of dead level Argentina and a climb over the incredible Andes height upon height of sheer and raw rock with the odd unlikely cactus on the lower slopes giving way to pockets of ice and snow, oppressive, antagonistic and altogether spicier as a back-screen) . . . he arrived at Santiago.

But not without *divertissement* of an amusing kind: for he was met at Los Andes, the border station, by two men with a car who said they were friends (but might just as easily have been bandits) and knew a short cut to the capital. The storm broke next day (but by that time Kurt Jooss, British choreographer and *visiteur de résistance*, was quietly and happily ensconced in bed) when it was revealed that they, by their friendly abduction, had circumnavigated not only one three-hour railway journey, but one President of the Instituto, one long-anticipatory student group, the Press and the photographers, who pursued a search until 2 a.m.

At Santiago, hastening back from their tour in the South, he found his three friends, all former members of his ballet group—Ernest Uthoff, Director of the Dance department of the University (unique, surely, this interest in Musical Science and Art?), Lola Botak and Rudolf Pescht.

Gala night, official welcome and performance by students of his own Drosselbart, found Kurt Jooss with a temperature of a hundred and one (for a touch of neuritis on the voyage he had been carefully inoculated with a fever), so that accounts are a little blurred. With normality came hard work—seven hours a day rehearsals for *Big City* and *Ball in Old Vienna* in July and, in September, *The Green Table* and *Pavane*: and finally for a new ballet which, tremendously successful, is still running.

* * *

What did he find in Chile? Well, Indians—at least Indians? Not an Indian! He found a new people imposed on an old place; a young people evolving against a fantastic background—a sound social and cultural set-up. He found what cannot be quenched or quelled—a vital and exuberant youth . . . so exciting a quality of that thing we all find hard, because too lovely, to define, that he gathered it up into the new *Juventud*, a ballet, not strong with pronounced statement as *The Green Table*—not strong, but lovely and of Strength: that very strength which we, the conspirators, so often reckon without—the will to survive—*Juventud*—Youth.

The adventure looks like a good, though unofficial ambassadorial job: the nett result for Kurt Jooss being the natural delight in, and a certain responsibility for, the dancing future of Chile.

A.G.-R.

THE LANGUAGE OF DANCE

By PAUL TASSOVIN

WHAT an ephemeral art is the ballet! What a primitive art, one may add. Few people realise that so undeveloped is its present state, that only in this twentieth century has it reached the period of evolution at which music, its natural companion, arrived in the eleventh century.* Yet dance as a cult and pastime of man has been in existence as long as mankind itself.

Is it not lamentable to contemplate that since time was, the greatest treasures of terpsichore have been lost to posterity, and continue to be lost, for the simple reason that no adequate means of notation has ever existed? Is this lack of discovery and invention due to laziness? Or is it that choreographers and dancers have not the scientific mind?

It is remarkable, nay regrettable, that even in this age of enlightenment choreographers are content, or resigned to the fact that their works, at any rate in their full authenticity, will die with them, and often before them.

One may take the view of course that nothing that really matters is lost, for man goes on eternally repeating himself; only the form changes, the substance is the same. Thus the style fashionable a hundred years ago, or fifty years, or even twenty years is outmoded by the present, as the present will be outmoded by tomorrow.

Have we not for instance observed with consternation and dismay ballets by Fokine and Massine that enthralled us in the 'thirties that being revived in the 'forties were found lifeless, devoid of any rapture. Ballets that yesteryear made our spirits soar, that caused us to rave with enthusiasm, being seen after a period of time, appear to have lost their vital living currents; the truth of them does not register coherently, the rhythms have become feeble and uncertain . . . they are mere ghosts.

These things have happened in our time, but we must not refer the dismal failure of such revivals entirely to the ravages of fashion. Time takes its toll in many ways. The dancers who breathed lustre into those remembered works may have departed, and those who rekindled them anew may have done so without the heart and knowledge of their predecessors. Only the great can serve the great with any degree of adequacy.

It is not surprising then that there is so little integrity in the world of ballet, since it depends for its continuance in the light of tradition upon word of mouth, upon

being handed down from teacher to pupil. It is obvious that true and honest artificers will not always be seen and heard, but rather those who shout the loudest.

In spite of these misfortunes some traces of tradition remain; there are some old great works that time cannot wither, and some classics from the nineteenth century survive like ancient monuments partially restored, their presence among us still being due, most oddly, to one man with a seemingly most inaccurate brain.

Yes, it is indisputable that most of the *régisseurs*, *maîtres de ballets*, choreographers, call them what you will, are lackadaisical fellows when it comes to preserving the fruits of genius. They would rather rely upon someone else's brain, than keep records of exactitude.

Considering these things, the outlook might be extremely depressing, but for the fact that a beginning has at last been made to fasten the intricacies of dance to a system of measurements and symbols that can be translated into a lucid dance script. It is significant that the first notation system comes not from the ballet,* but from one of the progressive moderns, Rudolf von Laban.

Kurt Jooss and Sigurd Leeder have used Laban's laborious system to record all the ballets of Jooss, and apart from long hours of study required to script and cipher, it has proved satisfactory and accurate.

More recently in America, Alwin Nikolais who studied Laban's system in 1937, has after ten years of study, brought out a new and comprehensive system which he calls "choroscript"—a system in which he has endeavoured to eliminate some of the more tedious difficulties of the former.

Both these systems are at present functioning in varying degrees in the U.S., and in Colleges and Modern Dance Schools considerable study is devoted to the subject. In this way choreographers and dancers are becoming aware of the possibility of overcoming the dilemma of dance illiteracy.

Further advance is being made by the Dance Notation Bureau which has been set up with the object of recording the important modern dance works which abound in New York. Its task, however, is likely to cover a far wider field, since it has already been commissioned by Ballet Society to notate all the Balanchine

Continued at foot of next page

*The musical stave as we know it today was popularly systematised by Guido D'Arezzo in the early part of the 11th century.

*In the late 19th century Stepanov devised a system using music notes to show movement. It was only partially successful and failed to achieve a wide recognition.

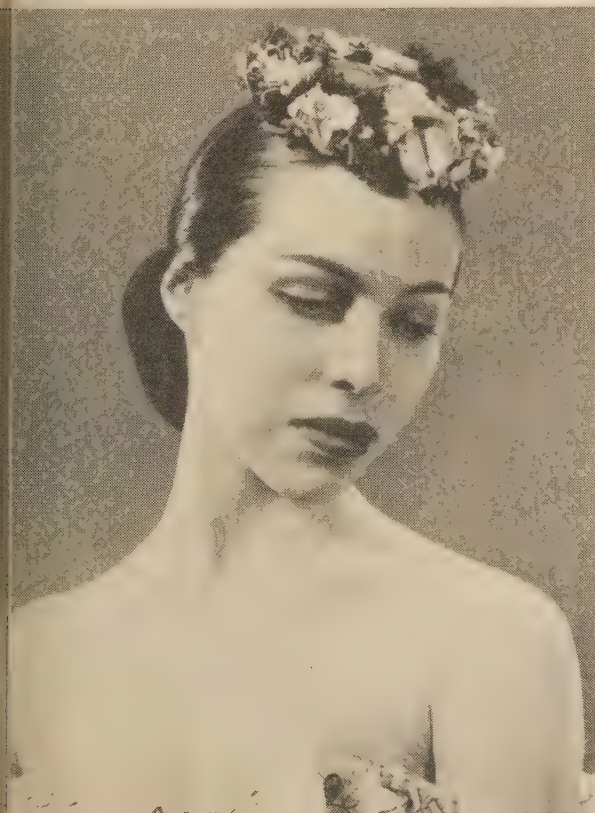
THE SPRING SEASON IN NEW YORK

By MURRAY FRIEDMAN

THE New York City Ballet, formerly Ballet Society, came into its own as an independent organisation on January 13th. Earlier in the season, it had been giving two performances per week on the "off" nights of the opera season. The most notable event on the programme was the first performance in New York of Antony Tudor's *Time Table*. This ballet was the first that Mr. Tudor created after his arrival in the United States from England. It was presented in South America during the goodwill tour of the American Ballet. It was not, however, done in the United States until this performance.

Time Table has not the poignancy of *Jardin aux Lilas*, which preceded it, nor the dramatic impact of *Pillar of Fire* which came a year later. It is, at best, a minor effort, but it has charm and reflects Mr. Tudor's "know-how". It is a ballet of atmosphere rather than a narrative

ALMA TALLCHIEF OF THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET, WHO APPEARED AS GUEST ARTIST WITH BALLET THEATRE DURING THEIR SPRING SEASON



ballet and all the action takes place in a rural railroad station at the end of World War I. A train will come and then go. A Marine sergeant is taking leave of his sweetheart, and around the lovers move a variety of other people—Marine privates, young girls, a woman awaiting the return of her soldier lover.

Although Marie-Jeanne and Francisco Moncion performed beautifully, it was clear that there would have to be many more rehearsals before this company, so thoroughly imbued with the Balanchine approach, can give a Tudor ballet the kind of interpretation it demands. The idea of bringing in new choreographers, especially of sharply different approach, like Mr. Tudor, will be good for the company.

The directors were probably well advised to start with such an unpretentious Tudor ballet. When the company has digested this one, I should like to see it attempt a major work by that choreographer. It is interesting, by the way, to note the intimations of *Pillar of Fire* in *Time Table*.

The score for the ballet was Aaron Copland's *Music for the Theatre*, which has served other choreographers, and scenery and costumes were by James Stewart Morcom.

The other new ballet of the New York City Ballet was Jerome Robbins' *The Guests*, to music by Marc Blitzstein. It was the first new Robbins ballet in two years and it will save time to state at the outset that I was disappointed. It is, according to the programme, a

The Language of Dance (continued from previous page)

ballets in the repertoire of the New York City Ballet. The importance of this ambitious undertaking cannot be over-estimated, the result of which may prove an epoch-making advance towards the clarifying and establishing of a universally recognised dance calligraphy.

I hope that the progressive spirit and the achievements of our friends in the west may provoke some interest in this country. Surely with our considerable resources the time is at hand when a start should be made to dispel illiteracy, and place ballet on a more secure, more permanent, and imperishable foundation.

In a future article I should like to discuss various aspects of the Laban and Nikolais systems, with possibly some illustrations to assist the reader in grasping the basis of these pioneering developments.

"classical ballet" with social significance, which is all right as far as I am concerned. Unfortunately, Mr. Robbins was thinking so much about his message that he didn't pay enough attention to the ballet part. Consequently, the message seems laboured.

This is a ballet about intolerance. The Guests consist of those who wear a caste mark on their foreheads and are accepted by the host, and those who have no caste mark and are rejected. The work has so many frite passages that one wishes Mr. Robbins had spent the time on something else. Mr. Robbins is a gifted choreographer. He usually has the ability of visual conception and usually, too, has shown himself willing to depart from the old grooves. Probably this is just one effort which didn't come off. There was, however, one very good section, a *pas de deux* beautifully danced by Maria Tallchief and Nicolas Magallanes.

The remainder of the City Ballet's presentations were revivals of ballets given earlier in the year. Merce Cunningham's *The Seasons* and Todd Bolender's *Mother Goose* have improved with time and, of course, there was the core of Balanchine ballets. *Orpheus* was performed superbly. More and more it looms as the most significant recent work by the choreographer. Nicolas Magallanes, in the title role, has added depth and poetry to his interpretation while Maria Tallchief, as Eurydice, and Francisco Moncion as the Dark Angel gave their customary satisfactory performances.

Symphony in C continues to be a brilliant showpiece. *Four Temperaments*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Symphonie Concertante* and *Bacchus and Ariadne* were among the other revivals.

Certain dancers should be especially commended for their work. Maria Tallchief, as first ballerina, danced cleanly and with increasing technical command. Marie-Jeanne was, as always, breathtaking in her easy mastery of the most arduous assignments. I doubt whether there is another ballerina in the country who can equal her work in *Symphony in C* with its double turns in the air and its enormous and continual physical demands. Among the newer artists, Jocelyn Vollmar, recruited from the San Francisco Ballet, was a welcome addition to the roster. She moves beautifully and although she is not physically as strong a dancer as Maria Tallchief or Marie-Jeanne, she has a very desirable quality of her own. Beatrice Tompkins should be commended for the sincerity she brings to her roles and Joan Djourup is a young lady who will bear watching. She has grown technically and artistically since last year and when she was given a leading role in *Four Temperaments* she was equal to the occasion. Georgia Hiden deserves particular mention. In her quiet way she bolsters the young girls in the *corps de ballet* and seems to draw them along with herself into more even and considered performances. Tanaquil Le Clercq continues to realise her great promise.

Despite the fact that the New York City Ballet

Company is one of the most satisfactory appearing before the New York public, there are some changes I would like to see made. Principally, there is the question of choreographers. The programmes are over-weighted with Balanchine ballets and sometimes that seems too much of a good thing. Mr. Balanchine is one of the great choreographers of the world, but the public and the company would be well-served by a more balanced fare. One of the original aims of Ballet Society was to give ample opportunity to new dance ideas, especially those of comparatively unrecognised dance creators. What are needed are *major* works that will offer contrasts of approach and execution. It might not even be a bad idea to add a leavening of classics to the repertoire. *Les Sylphides*, *Swan Lake Act II*, *Coppélia*, even one or more of the famous *pas de deux* would be gratefully received.

The most exciting event of the season has been the return of Ballet Theatre after an absence of a year. The company disbanded after the spring season of 1948 and when it made its appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House on Easter Sunday there were some familiar faces missing. Alicia Alonso is touring in Latin America with her own troupe. Lucia Chase has withdrawn from active dancing, and several of the former soloists were also unavailable. Nevertheless, Nana Gollner and Maria Tallchief were added for this season, helping to staff the ballets.

The principal defect apparent is the lack of smooth teamwork. New dancers have been added and, of course, the old dancers had not worked together for almost a year. All this, however, is secondary. There is a new and thrilling quality about the group, above all when one compares it with the blasé attitude of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Everything seems fresher—the sets, the costumes, the orchestra, under Max Goberman, the faces of the dancers.

The familiar repertoire, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pillar of Fire*, *Apollo*, *Fall River Legend*, *Fancy Free*, *Helen of Troy*, *Tally Ho!*, *Gala Performance*, *Jardin aux Lilas*, etc., as well as a small group of classics was being offered. There were two novelties—a revival of *La Fille Mal Gardée* and a new version by George Balanchine of *Princess Aurora*.

Some of the old ballets could be dropped without great loss. They were interesting for a season or two but now serve only to provide dead spots in otherwise interesting programmes. The return of *La Fille mal Gardée*, however, was quite welcome. It makes for a humorous contrast when it follows one of Mr. Tudor's sombre works.

Said to be the oldest ballet still being danced and going back more than 150 years, the story is simple. Lisette, the daughter of Mother Simone, a well-to-do farmer, loves a peasant lad. Simone discourages the romance, hoping for a financially more advantageous match. Her choice is the half-witted son of a prosperous



NANA GOLLNER AND IGOR YOUSKEVITCH IN "GISELLE"



NORA KAYE AS GISELLE, AGAIN WITH IGOR YOUSKEVITCH

neighbour. The comic complications culminate in a final scene where Lisette's lover, who has slipped into the house, is unable to escape and hides in the hayloft. Simone, on her return, banishes Lisette to the hayloft and turns with the neighbour, the son and the notary to the details of the marriage contract. The young lovers come sheepishly from the loft, Simone relents, and gives her blessing to the pair.

For a ballet which had not been given for six years, this has been put into wonderfully good shape. First honours must go to Edward Caton, who returned as guest artist, for his hilarious characterisation of Simone. Nana Gollner was superb as Lisette, exhibiting a farcical talent that was funny without being crude. Igor Youskevitch made a technically good lover, but John Kriza, when he took over the part, brought exactly the tongue-in-cheek attitude needed to complement Miss Gollner. Both Paul Godkin and Eric Braun who alternated in the role of Alain, the dim-witted son, were fine choices.

As for *Princess Aurora*, I found it interesting but so far removed from the traditional rendition that it should have been advertised as a new ballet. The programme might have read, "A ballet by George Balanchine to music by Tchaikovsky; suggested by *Princess Aurora*."

The Rose Adagio has been cut out and the variations have been changed. It was nice to see the Three Ivans, at least.

A highlight of the season was Nora Kaye's New York debut in *Giselle*, which scored a tremendous success. I do not think Miss Kaye has given as polished a performance as she is capable of, but I know that time and experience before an audience will smooth out the rough edges. Her Act I was the best I have seen in New York. There she is simple, ingenuous and, above all, credible. Act II was technically satisfactory, but lacked something in phrasing and fluidity. Igor Youskevitch, who is dancing better than ever, was a reassuring partner and did his solos with precision and style. Diana Adams gets a bouquet of orchids from this department for her performance as Queen of the Wilis.

Nana Gollner did the other two *Giselles* and left me satisfied but hoping for more. Here is one of America's really great ballerinas. Every performance shows artistry but her execution is sometimes more than a little ragged. One had the impression that she was out of practice, an impression that was reinforced by the fact that she improved as the season progressed.

Two ballets by Mr. Tudor have scarcely been better put together. In *Pillar of Fire* Miss Kaye seems to dance

with a controlled passion that marks her more and more clearly America's first dramatic ballerina. Janet Reed was the carelessly innocent younger sister and Mary Burr the eldest sister. Miss Burr was competent, but I can't imagine that anyone is likely to make us forget Lucia Chase's magnificent work in this part. Surely this was Miss Chase's best role.

Jardin aux Lilas too seems to have gained by the new rehearsals needed to bring it into shape for presentation. Nora Kaye, Maria Tallchief, Hugh Laing and Antony Tudor combine to bring us once again the beauties that the ballet holds and that had been obscured by routine performances. Miss Tallchief is an ideal counterpart to Miss Kaye. Her tense style, joined with Miss Kaye's intensity, made for an electric impulse when they approached each other on stage.

There is not too much to say about the other ballets. *Romeo and Juliet* seems, somehow, longer than it did. Some more rehearsals would not do this work any harm. There was one stand out performance, however—Nicolas Orloff as Mercutio. He is full of the spirit and fire that have been noteworthy about his dancing for years now. One cannot imagine this artist giving less than his best

whether in the smallest provincial town or on the stages of the Metropolitan. Even as Albrecht's friend in *Giselle* he makes his part stand out. One is happy to see him back with Ballet Theatre.

Fall River Legend I found even more tedious than last year. *Tally Ho!* held my attention because it gave Janet Reed another opportunity to display her considerable talents. *Gala Performance* could do with a long rest as far as I am concerned. *Billy the Kid* was given a really splendid performance. John Kriza is better than ever as Billy, although I would like to see him the least little bit tougher as the desperado who killed his first man at the age of twelve.

Norma Vance and Jocelyn Vollmar, the latter loaned from New York City Ballet, were two soloists who were pressed into service in many ballets. Both gave promise of greater things to come. Edward Caton brought distinction to all the character parts he played. As Mother Simone in *La Fille mal Gardée*, the Duke in *Giselle*, the Sorcerer in *Swan Lake* and the Ballet Master in *Gala Performance*, and several others, he brings back a sure professionalism. Choreographer (*Sebastian*) and well-known ballet master, he offers much as a performer.

JOHN KRIZA AND JANET REED IN "FANCY FREE"



BABY BALLET

By ENID HOLMES

OWING largely to the intelligence, tenacity and single-mindedness of Ninette de Valois, the Sadler's Wells Ballet today are in the position of being one of the most admired, successful and homogeneous ballet troupes in the world. Ballet in England being a growth of little more than fifteen years, this is an unparalleled state of affairs and reflects immense credit on the woman who has made it possible. The discerning ballet-goer, however, can recognise a current situation no less unparalleled—and a less creditable one—in its existence at Sadler's Wells Theatre itself. Here is a little company which has only been in existence for just over three years, backed, it is true, by the now colossal reputation of the name "Sadler's Wells Ballet," but a company which has earned praise, particularly for its male dancing, among ballet critics and audiences all over this country and in the leading Irish towns: a company where the standards are continually varying, the dancers always changing, not by the elimination of the weakest, but by the removal of the strongest and most finished as soon as they become poised and self-confident. The cream is perpetually skimmed off and replaced with inferior material, which is in its turn perfected, and removed—not so much a vicious circle as a species of eternally descending spiral.

Let us consider the contribution of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet to the Covent Garden company in the light, say, of their recent big production—*Cinderella*. While giving full credit to Messrs. Ashton and Helpmann, one must conclude from the bursts of applause that follow the conclusion of his every variation that Alexander Grant scores the greatest individual success, while the most spontaneous and charming dancing comes from Nadia Nerina. Outstanding also among the four Friends of the Prince is the ease, control and lightness of Kenneth MacMillan: Anne Heaton and Donald Britton are two more dancers from "the Wells" who have filled several roles in other ballets with conspicuous success. At first sight, all this would seem to prove the soundness of Miss de Valois' policy: but one must not overlook the reverse side of the coin. Here we have such talented young dancers as Greta Hamby, Pauline Wadsworth and Sheila Nelson disappearing into the *corps de ballet* with, one fears, little hope of receiving any such opportunities as those they took with such enthusiasm and success at Sadler's Wells.

While watching a recent performance of *Les Sylphides* by the Theatre Ballet the moral was brought increasingly home when one realised that what was, if not the best,

then one of the best, current productions of this too often depressingly performed ballet has now become one of the worst. In past seasons, we have been delighted by the soft romanticism and lovely elevation of Nerina's Mazurka, the striking personality, intelligence and beauty of Pauline Wadsworth in the Waltz—and good Waltzes are as rare as golden sovereigns—and the musical intuition of Anne Heaton's Prelude: an unusually successful and well balanced trio. Nowadays one must regretfully conclude that the female soloists are nearly all miscast and inadequate.

Perhaps, too, it would not be out of place here to appeal to the musical director not to make visual nonsense of fifty per cent. of the choreography of nearly every ballet, and to point out that, after all, the music is there as a component part of the ballet, and if the audience wanted only a concert interpretation they would possibly be in Kensington, not Islington?

Another cause for disquiet is the choreographical policy of the "little company". The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet is intended, one understands, partly to be a training school for young choreographers in exactly the same sense as it is for dancers: yet when one considers the records of the Company's achievements in this sphere, one discovers that of the four young choreographers whose works have been tried out, three have subsequently parted company with Sadler's Wells and the fourth has been removed to Covent Garden—not as choreographer, which would appear to be the obvious justification for this move, but as *corps de ballet* dancer. When one considers the fact that two recent opera productions, either of which could have provided useful experience to the young would-be choreographer, have had their ballets arranged by a person totally unconnected with Sadler's Wells, with very unsatisfactory results, one wonders what the Powers-That-Be are about.

It is heartbreaking to the serious ballet connoisseur (who is bound to discover the charm and vitality of this young Company sooner or later) to see what was the most delightfully spontaneous and enthusiastic English company of a decade becoming spiritless owing to the unsettling feeling that once a dancer is any good he or she will immediately be transplanted to the Garden, and overtired through the resultant extra rehearsal necessitated by these constant upheavals. It can be no less heartbreaking to the ballet mistress to see another company reaping the benefits of much backbreaking work while fresh, raw dancers replace the finished product at terrifying speed. Our National Ballet must

Continued at foot of next page

TWO INDIAN DANCERS

(1) UDAY SHANKAR TODAY

By CYNTHIA WALL

A SMALL poster in Tottenham Court Road was my first informant of the fact that Uday Shankar was back in London.

The wheel had apparently turned almost the complete cycle. This was an anti-climax after the wild adulation with which Uday had been received in 1938 in London, New York and all the traditional "Art" capitals of Europe; after the thundering applause and the cheering audiences which greeted his every appearance. Then his name had leaped in neon lights across the Continent and half way across the world. Now it was six inches high on an India League poster.

But those wild days before the war were the climax of a great career. When Uday stood at the peak of his success, did he ever pause and look back and think of the great dancer who had watched a young art student in London and said: "This boy *must* dance?"

I know he did. Seeing that poster, my mind surged immediately back to a sticky day in Madras, a bare room furnished only with carpets, cushions and a tea trolley; and I remembered Uday's voice recalling his art school days in London. He used to enjoy splashing colour indiscriminately on to a large canvas and imagining himself an Impressionist; while his master told him gently that he must follow the school of his own country—he must paint miniatures. Recalling how Pavlova adopted him, writing to the head of the Royal College of Art to apologise for stealing his most promising pupil, "but he simply *must* dance".

Everything Pavlova touched seemed to turn to gold, and it was so with Uday Shankar. He had always been a great personality. He became a very great dancer.

World War II came when he was at the height of his career. Dartington Hall had echoed with the sound of his veenas, tampouras and tablas, and his bare feet had left their imprint on the grass under the yew trees. Now it had to remain an echo while Uday returned to his own country.

Baby Ballet (continued from previous page)

of course be maintained and perfected, but it is a pity in the process perpetually to dislocate the integrity and spoil the charm of England's "Baby Ballet". Please, Miss de Valois! Your little Company can stand on its own squarely if the ground is not everlastingly to be cut from beneath its feet: and many fine dancers could with advantage be shown to the appreciative old "Vic-Wells" audience instead of lost for ever amid the vast depths of the Covent Garden corps.

There, in the Himalayas, under the Everlasting Snow and with the scent of the pines all around him, he founded his school—"The Uday Shankar Culture Centre Almora."

I think that was the happiest time of his life. He loved India passionately and was determined that his culture should flourish untainted by Western influences. This was his opportunity to continue quietly the stimulation of that Renaissance which had already begun with such a blaze of publicity. Around him collected a happy band of enthusiasts, all fired I suspect as much by his personality as by his dreams. There were his brother Ravi, brilliant, detached, and an expert sitar player; Simkie, the beautiful French girl who was the rare exception to the contention that only Indians can perform the classical dances of India; Amala, later to become Mrs. Uday Shakar; Vishnudas Shirali, ever-faithful Musical Director; and a host of young pupils from all over India—from widely varying backgrounds (there was no caste system here) but all eager to dance.

They were taught not only dancing, but dramatics, voice production, history, literature, music and painting. Remembering his happiness there, I imagine it must have been a bitter pill indeed to swallow when Uday realised after many months of hard work and fun in the mountains that his disciples weren't *really* interested in art for culture's sake. What they wanted was to learn to dance quickly and then to make for Bombay and commercialise their knowledge, perhaps even under the title "Pupils of Uday Shankar."

The Culture Centre closed, the costumes and musical instruments and books were packed sadly away and Uday and Amala left their mountain retreat with Shirali to embark on the last stage of Uday's career. Not only all his savings, but all his tremendous energy and genius were now directed into a new medium: films, and in particular *The film, Kalpana*.

There was hardly a breath of publicity now. Simkie had married and was working for All India Radio. Ravi had joined the Indian People's Theatre. Uday, Amala and Shirali were on their own now, starting again from scratch. Somehow he collected together his cast, numbering hundreds. He built his scenery and decors, made his costumes, wrote his fabulous script, bought a camera, hired a studio. None of them knew the first ABC's of film-making; he learnt it through patience, hard work and an awful lot of patience.

It took five years to make *Kalpana*; five years during which funds ran very low and there was illness



Photograph by Gemini Studios

UDAY SHANKAR AS SHIVA, THE GOD OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION, WITH AMALI AS PARVATI, SHIVA'S CONSORT, WHO SYMBOLISES THE EARTH, IN THE DANCE "SHIVA-PARVATI"

and despondency; five years spent between the studios and "The Hermitage," the Shankar house which lived up to its name because now there was no social life whatsoever; five years working, working, all day and often all night, training actors, dancers, musicians and even film technicians. Towards the end of the five years when I met him again Uday was hopeful but rattling with inspirations.

Was it worth it? Not commercially, for it was not undertaken with that purpose. Its purpose was, broadly, to satirise the Philistinism of modern society and so to stir the conscience of the over-box-office-conscious world. Whether *Kalpana* will succeed in this is doubtful indeed, but the important point is that the effort has been made and Uday has satisfied something in him for the time being.

Kalpana must, of course, be re-edited and supplied with sub-headings before it can be shown with profit to the Western audience. Many will shake their heads as they did over *The Red Shoes*, and contend that ballet on the screen is just a contradiction in terms. But let us be realists and accept at least the possibilities of a newer art form. Uday Shankar has always been something of a

pioneer. Let us bow to that intelligence and realism which has enabled him to forsake his beloved theatre and turn to the screen, a medium which after all will reach many millions of his own countrymen who would otherwise have had no acquaintance with this great dancer.

(2) MRINALINI SARABHAI

By LISA GORDON SMITH

MRINALINI SARABHAI is not only the first Indian woman dancer to bring a company to London, but also has the even greater distinction of being the first Indian dancer to receive a government grant to enable her to take a company abroad for the purpose of showing two forms of the Indian dance to the western world. Such a grant is not lightly awarded and Madame Sarabhai and her company, all young and enthusiastic artists, are greatly thrilled at this well deserved honour.

The authenticity of their dancing is apparent even to western eyes. Mrinalini Sarabhai confines her programme to Bharata Natyam and Kathakali, the two

classical dance forms of South India, from whence she comes, and both these are shown in their pure state, neither the dance nor the music being westernised in any way.

Madame Sarabhai told me that although in India there are no "ballets" as we understand the term, there are a large number of Dance Dramas, many of them more than 3,000 years old. As these normally last several hours, sometimes even continuing throughout the night, they would, of course, be quite unsuitable for presenting to a European audience in their original form; but, although Madame Sarabhai gives us shortened versions of, and extracted scenes and soli from them, in no case does she alter the dance form or idiom.

I asked her what she thinks of western ballet.

"I enjoy it very much," she told me. "But I think your classical mime is very limited compared with ours; you use your whole body sometimes to express one word, while we may use just one finger, or even only a muscle of the face, to express an entire emotion." She went on to say that, although Indian dancing was first performed for small groups of people in natural surroundings and later in very small theatres, no alteration has been made, now that Indian theatres tend to be larger, to the subtle gestures and facial movements which are so essential a part of the age-old tradition of Indian dancing.

The vocabulary of Indian mime is extraordinarily large and it takes the dancers many years of intensive study to know it thoroughly. I asked whether an equally complete understanding on the part of the audience is, in India, considered necessary for full appreciation, but Madame Sarabhai assured me that it is not.

"Indian audiences are very much like your own," she said. "A few understand the mime very well, some understand it a little, but many not at all. They are content merely to regard it as beautiful movement. In any case, much of the music is in the form of song, which explains the action as well as accompanying the dancers."

Mrinalini Sarabhai, herself a dancer of great technical power and subtlety of interpretation, has gathered together a small company well fitted to carry out her intention of showing the pure dance forms of her native South India.

Chatunni Panicker, whose dynamic personality projects the character he is portraying across to the audience with an impelling force which is quite startling, is at his best in Kathakali dancing, which is, of all the four types of Indian dancing, the most readily comprehended by occidentals. The exciting leaps, the turned out knees in the frequently and effectively used *pliés* and the "line" of most of the basic positions of the body bear a considerable resemblance to many of the general outlines of our own ballet and conform in an outstandingly obvious manner to the fundamental laws of beauty about

which East and West appear to have, broadly, the same idea.

Shivashanker, also, is a dancer of great skill and notable facial expression, and his interpretation of the role of the Snake Charmer in *Upagupta* (*The Disciple of Buddha*) was quite brilliant.

The most outstanding item in the company's repertoire was *Manushya* (*Man*) which I had taken to be an adaptation of one of the classical dance dramas, until Mrinalini Sarabhai told me that the choreography and the story were her own. She used Kathakali dance technique and form, and traditional music.

I was curious to know how Indian audiences would react if they saw this new ballet, in many ways so different from their usual dance dramas.

"But they have seen it," Madame Sarabhai assured me, "and they love it. In fact, that ballet was the deciding factor in getting me the government grant. Both *Manushya* and my adaptations of the classical dramas were greatly appreciated in India. I would never put on anything, anywhere, that I would be ashamed to show in my own country," she continued, "for, although I hope to come to Europe again and again to dance, I must always be able to return to my own country. It is only from there I can draw my inspiration, and without that I could not live."

Of her future plans, Mrinalini Sarabhai could only say

MRINALINI SARABHAI WITH CHATUNNI PANICKER



that she hopes to return to London to dance as soon as possible, and in the meanwhile to take her dancers before as many and as varied audiences as can be arranged.

She hopes to present many more of her own ballets in Kathakali and Bharata Natyam dance forms and possibly to arrange some dances to be performed to a recited, instead of a sung or instrumental, accompani-

ment. She has never seen this done, but having heard of it, feels that it would have great possibilities for her form of dancing.

It is to be hoped that the return of Mrinalini Sarabhai and her company of dancers and musicians to London will not be long delayed, for their promise exceeds even their already outstandingly excellent performance.

TELEVISION BALLET

By LISA GORDON SMITH

WITH the decision not to telecast the Opéra Comique Ballet and the scattering on tour of the various artists required for the final Grand Recital, the French Ballet television series petered out. No doubt the decisions and circumstances responsible for this were necessary and unavoidable, but a certain amount of regret on the viewers' part is inevitable.

But ballet has not been neglected at Alexandra Palace. In place of the lost French programmes, we have had three examples of British ballet in the past two months, and, without going into the vexed question of English Dancers v. The Rest, it is pleasant to record that whatever qualities they may be thought to lack, integrity and discipline cannot be numbered among them; in these essential qualities they remain supreme.

On March 19th, Moira Shearer and Alexis Rassiné gave a performance of *Spectre de la Rose*, preceded by the *Casse-Noisette pas de deux* in which Shearer danced her very considerable best. Producer Michael Mills, with, apparently, the laudable intention of not cramping the dancers' style, kept the cameras almost stationary and gave them all the screen space they needed, plus some. One almost needed opera glasses for the more distant shots! In *Casse-Noisette* he succeeded in showing a display of good dancing—and nothing more.

The choice of *Spectre de la Rose* seemed, in theory, a good one, it having the minimum number of dancers and the sort of story potentially suited to the medium; yet, somehow, it failed to "jell". There was no attempt to make use of television's possibilities, such as making the *Spectre* appear as a spirit, and, in direct contrast to the first item on the programme, Mr. Mills "panned" the *Spectre's* solo closely. No doubt his intention was again laudable—that of displaying Rassiné's dancing, which was admirable—but the beautiful floor pattern was lost, to the disappointment of viewers who knew the ballet and the probable bewilderment of some who did not. I have never seen Moira Shearer dance this ballet on the stage, but on television it appeared not to suit her as well as I had expected, although her handling of her skirt in her solo, while dancing on a diagonal line, was cleverly done and made the only memorable

pattern in the whole programme; and her awakening from the dream expressed the change from elation to disappointment extremely well.

If the producer had reversed his procedure and "panned" *Casse-Noisette* to show off the dancers, while giving us *Spectre de la Rose* as a whole, it would have been more logical and perhaps more interesting; however, Madame Karsavina's introductory talk and the brilliance of the dancing made the programme one to be remembered.

On March 29th, the Metropolitan Ballet, having flown back from Jersey for the purpose, gave a full programme, produced by Christian Simpson. This was, I believe, his first production. He had been heralded with fanfares of advance publicity as a producer with many ideas about televising ballet. He certainly had, and appeared to have used them *all*! In fact, he produced very good television, but at no little sacrifice of the ballet.

Fanciulla delle Rose came up fairly well and was, in some respects, improved. At least we did not have to peer at it between pillars! But the placing on the screen was not good at times, accompanied by no little amputating of the dancers' legs—a pity, as this is the right type of ballet for televising and could have been very successful with more interesting lighting.

Designs with Strings, which, being almost nothing but pure pattern, should have been really wonderful on the screen, lost a lot of the excitement of the stage version. Here again, bad placing and uninteresting lighting marred a production saved only by the quality of the dancing, which was of an unexpectedly high standard. The company, as a whole and as individuals, have progressed to a quite astonishing degree in recent months.

The inevitable *Swan Lake* (Act II) was danced, effectively but in a very dull stage set, by Domini Callaghan partnered by Eric Hyrst. It was in this ballet that Mr. Simpson really let himself go, and some quite surprising sights—and sounds—were presented. An introduction, spoken through the music, was almost inaudible. Not so the producer's instructions to his

technicians; we received them loud and clear, which was rather destructive of the atmosphere.

The camera followed the dancers slavishly—except when it was ahead of them, as was the case during Odette's fall into Benno's arms. The *pas de quatre* was "panned" so closely that it was only by glancing at the background that one became aware that it was not being danced *sur place*. Furthermore, they had all lost their feet, and the outside girls were being "nibbled" by the edges of the screen.

There was an attempt to swing into a quick close-up of the Prince. Unfortunately, the camera caught only that part of him "where the back changes its name" and had to retract in haste and an atmosphere of blushing!

The finale was the most trying of all, for Odette

pirouetted off through a maze of tree trunks to following camera, and mere human eyes rebelled at so much kaleidoscopic movement.

On May 10th, Margot Fonteyn made her first appearance at Alexandra Palace since the reopening of television after the war. She, with Michael Somes and Harold Turner, danced *sol*, *pas des deux* and *pas des trois* from some ballets no longer in the repertoire. This delightful programme, produced by Philip Bates, admirably fulfilled the wish expressed by Frederick Ashton in his introductory speech: "to please those who are ballet lovers and interest those who are not."

This was a *divertissement* programme lasting only twenty minutes, and no attempt could be made to achieve television-ballet as such, yet the television technique was so good as to be imperceptible; it was

ALEXIS RASSINE AND MOIRA SHEARER IN "LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE" TELEVISED ON MARCH 19TH

B.B.C. photograph





MARGOT FONTEYN WHO APPEARED IN A SPECIAL TELEVISION PROGRAMME ON MAY 10TH.

GRAND BALLET DE MONTE CARLO IN PARIS

THE Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo have just had a very brief season, lasting only one week, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. This was all too short, as the programme included seven new items, already presented at Monte Carlo.

In addition, there was one new work composed for the Paris season; a ballet by Bronislava Nijinska, called *Memoriam* and created to commemorate the centenary of Chopin's death.

We all know that Madame Nijinska's inspiration is on the grand scale and that her compositions are the result of long thought. *In Memoriam* is danced to the Fantasia on D Minor, to the Grand Fantasia on Polish airs, and to the posthumous Polonaise No. 12. The painter, Jean Cocteau, has chosen exquisite shades of grey for the costumes, the backcloth being plain velvet curtains.

The principal interpreters of this ballet are Rosella Hightower, André Eglevsky, Ethery Pagava, and Anna Cheselska, supported by the entire *corps de ballet*. As soon as the curtain rises we enter the domain of pure poetry. One cannot say where the music ends and the dancing begins, so completely are they harmonised by

wisely kept subservient to the needs of the ballet, and the result was both sympathetic and refreshing.

It was fun to see the *pas de trois* from *The Lord of Burleigh* again, and Michael Somes, in the "Leo" solo from *Horoscope*, danced well and revived some more happy memories. *Rendezvous* has been seen more recently, but not with Harold Turner, whose performance of the solo on this occasion revealed once more that it is one of the finest examples of male choreography in modern ballet. His solo from *Rio Grande*, also in this most nostalgic programme, demonstrated that there is at least one English dancer who can be thoroughly acrobatic when the occasion demands.

The high-spot was Margot Fonteyn's solo from *The Wise Virgins*. As the Bride danced before the Gates of Heaven, Philip Bate fastened upon the extraordinarily beautiful choreography for the hands and head, and exploited it fully. Never before had those hand movements seemed so expressively lovely.

Let us hope that Mr. Bate will produce more such programmes as frequently as possible.

the creative thought of the choreographer. The pictures unfold in movement controlled by an ordered harmony; from time to time a passage is illuminated by genius; space is transformed into eternity, and movement becomes poetry.

In Memoriam is a rarefied work, making no concession to any emotional appeal, and for which the word ballet seems too heavy. Can beauty alone still move us? The answer is Yes, when an aesthetic talent of the order of Mme. Nijinska's is combined with sensibility, propriety of expression with unalloyed integrity.

FERDINAND REYNA.

One of the new ballets which the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo will be bringing to London is *Un Coeur de Diamant* with choreography by David Lichine, music by Jean Hubeau and décor by Nathalie Gontcharova. The story is based on Oscar Wilde's famous *Birthday of the Infanta* in which Wilde tried to convey the supremacy of beauty of mind over physical appearance. The choreographer expresses the same idea; a man, unaware



Skibine

INFANTA TOUMANOVA

A REHEARSAL SKETCH BY LARIONOV OF "UN COEUR DE DIAMANT" WHICH WILL BE CALLED "INFANTA" WHEN THE BALLET IS PRESENTED IN LONDON

of his physical deformity and believing himself to be handsome, discovers his ugliness through contact with reality, and dies. Until that moment, he saw the world and himself through the prism of his heart, and the choreography succeeds in making the spectator see the drama through that same prism and live the very life of the deformed and magnificent being. Skibine, who made a great impression in this country last year, is the dwarf who sees himself as a wonderful being, while the beautiful Tamara Toumanova is the Infanta.

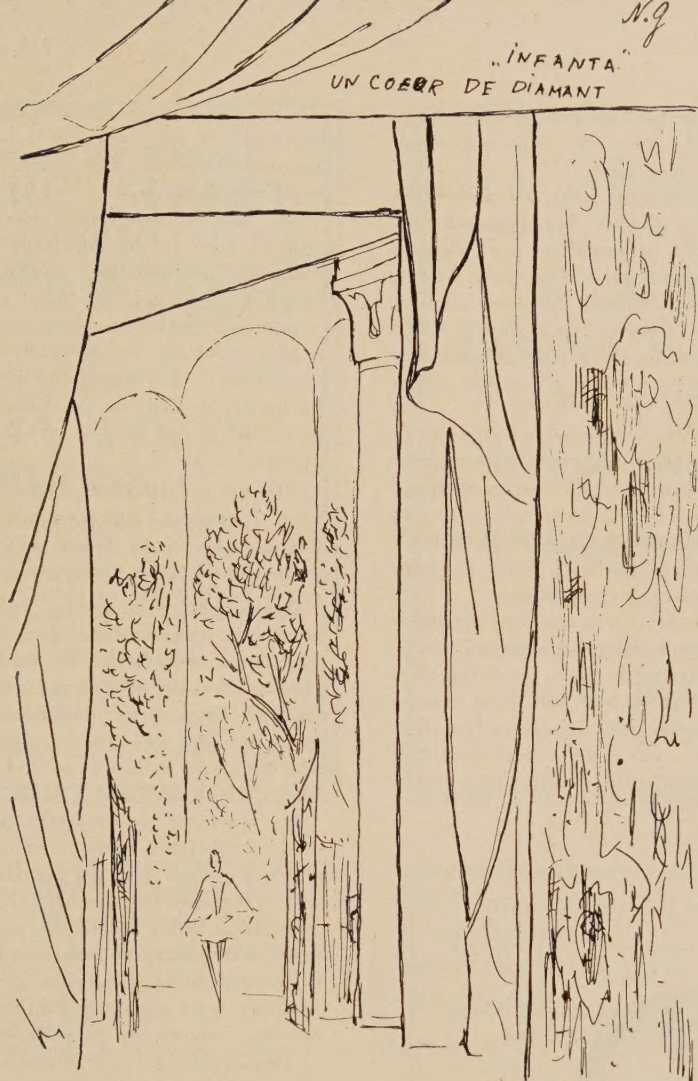
Another ballet about which there is considerable advance speculation is the revival of the Massine-Dali *Tristan Fou* (*Mad Tristan*) with Eglevsky and Ethery Pagava as Tristan and Isolde and Marjorie Tallchief as the Chimera of Isolde. This ballet was originally created by Massine for the de Cuevas Ballet International in 1944. The programme note informs us that Salvador Dali has expressed his own interpretation of the legend.

Tristan, driven mad by the anguish and grief which he feels in the absence of Isolde, is haunted by her memory and tormented to the point where his distracted mind sees his beloved as a praying mantis, devouring her former lover.

Balletomane's Bookshelf

DANCERS UNDER MY LENS—Essays in Ballet Criticism. By Cyril W. Beaumont. (Beaumont, London, 18s.)

This collection of some of Mr. Beaumont's critical essays covers the periods 1922-1935 and 1946-1948. The essays range over a wide field, being concerned with great individualists like Mary Wigman, Ruth St. Denis and the Sakharoffs as well as with the larger ballet companies, and this very diversity of subject, considered



in conjunction with the 26-year interval between the first and last essays, brings out more plainly than ever before the extent of Mr. Beaumont's understanding and the endurance of his critical standards.

As a critic, he is better qualified than almost any other writing authority: by richness of experience, historical and practical knowledge of the art of ballet, and also by his ability as a writer. He not only knows when a ballet is good or a dancer accomplished; he can state vividly, wittily, and often beautifully, exactly *why*. I do not think there is a single judgment in this book that is not clearly explained and argued. Sometimes (very seldom) one may not agree with the judgment; but there can never be any doubt as to how Mr. Beaumont arrived at that conclusion.

But the "rightness" of Mr. Beaumont's judgments in some of the earlier essays is quite breathtaking. He is pains to point out in his foreword that the essays refer

only to the performances actually noticed and "must not necessarily be regarded as applicable to subsequent performances, which may exhibit not only a marked improvement, but an equally sharp decline." Ballet criticism is very vulnerable to changing taste and changing performance, and how many of us must now blush to remember (if we are honest enough to remember) some of the ballets that once "carried us away". Mr. Beaumont never seems to have been carried away by anything—without just cause.

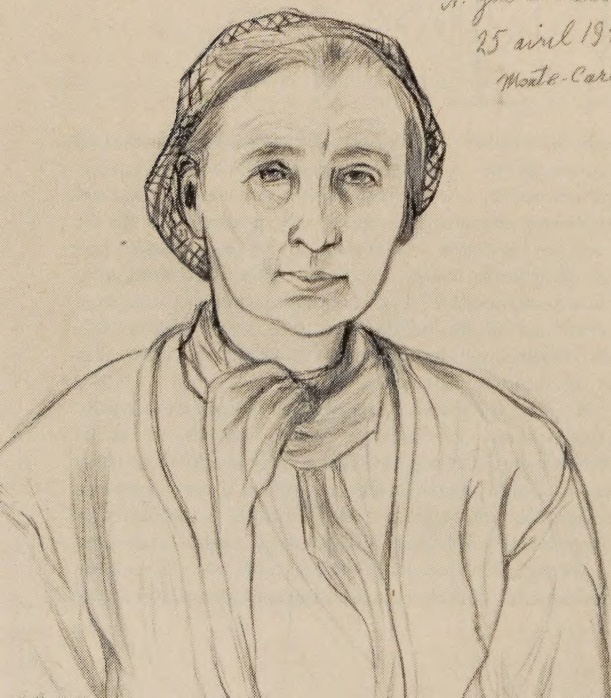
In 1931, for instance, when most people were wildly excited about the Camargo Society and the "birth of British ballet," he was criticising their productions from just the same standards that he applies to performances today. He found a great deal to criticise in the Camargo programmes and was questioning, right from the beginning, whether its policies were being genuinely carried out, whether some choreographers were not

being given too many opportunities and others too few, and whether it was really going the right way about establishing a healthy native ballet.

When Antony Tudor burnt his boats and decided to devote himself to choreography Mr. Beaumont watched his first ballet and thought "it would seem to indicate that his venture will be justified." The early Ashton ballets, with their echoes of Nijinska, Massine, Cocteau and Kochno, are soundly trounced but as soon as "pure Ashton" emerges in *The Lady of Shalott*, Mr. Beaumont is there to approve and say it "is worth a hundred ballets of the *Mercury* order."

There are two paragraphs in the book which seem to me to define very clearly Mr. Beaumont's beliefs about the responsibility of the critic and the responsibility of the ballet director. The first was written in 1932 and the second in 1946 after the Sadler's Wells Ballet's first performance at Covent Garden. They are both equally applicable to present-day conditions.

Admitting that English dancers at one time did suffer from lack of encouragement, Mr. Beaumont continues: "But there is a great difference between encouragement and the fulsome flattery that has been ladled out in some quarters. Promising dancers who are, in reality, only on the threshold of their careers, have been lauded as though they were finished artists of the first water.



This kind of thing is the greatest obstacle to progress that could be imagined. It is high time that all this nonsense ceased and that praise was awarded in strict proportion to merit."

The second paragraph regrets that "our young danseuses, seen in the cold light of new and, as yet, unfamiliar surroundings, seemed a shade too well disciplined, a thought too alike, as though pressed from a common mould. Discipline is essential in every walk of life, especially in the early stages of an artist's development. But there is a point in every career when the artiste, or shall we say dancer, must be allowed to spread his or her wings, and fail or triumph in the attempt."

MARY CLARKE.

KATHERINE DUNHAM—Her singers, dancers, musicians. Edited, and with introduction by Richard Buckle. Illustrated by Roger Wood and other photographers. (Published by Ballet Publications Ltd. Price £1).

This book of photographs, with the briefest of introductions by Richard Buckle, forms a magnificent souvenir programme of Katherine Dunham's London season. As I looked through it, I recaptured some of the thrill of *Caribbean Rhapsody* and I am sure everyone who saw this wonderful show will have the same reaction. Will those who did not see it be able to understand from this book why it was so exciting? I doubt it, for several reasons.

For one thing, no attempt is made in the photographs (and only sketchily in the introduction) to put Katherine Dunham's work into perspective. What is she after? what is the basis of her aesthetics? how much does she owe to classical ballet technique, to expressionist dancing? From these photographs alone, with no other evidence, a newcomer might justifiably conclude that *Caribbean Rhapsody* was no more than first-class cabaret, with no firm foundation in philosophy or technique.

Then, although Roger Wood's action photographs are often fine specimens of their kind, they succeed in communicating the essence of the individual items only in the programme only in those cases where the dancer made an effect solely through movement—with no "programme". Thus the photographs of *Nanigo* are not only good action photographs, but convey the spirit of this essay in abstract dance, whereas the *Shango* and *L'ag'ya* photographs are less successful because in these works the movement was not an end in itself but used to convey a meaning which the photographs, in spite of their captions, do not. You could never tell, for example, from these pictures how terrifying the Zombi sequence of *L'ag'ya* was. In such cases posed photographs would have been much more useful and effective.

However, as a souvenir, it is certainly well worth while and the photographs of works in rehearsal, the music by Tedesco and Ravel, whet my appetite for Katherine Dunham's next London season—oh, let us be soon!

FRANK JACKSON.

Karsavina and her husband THEATRE STREET

by TAMARA KARSAVINA 21/-

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THIRTY DOZEN MOONS

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